

**Opening Statement of Republican Leader
Cathy McMorris Rodgers
Subcommittee on Consumer Protection and Commerce
Hearing on “Keeping Kids and Consumers Safe from Dangerous Products”
June 13, 2019**

As Prepared for Delivery

Welcome to the Consumer Protection and Commerce Subcommittee hearing. Today marks our first legislative hearing... and we're here to discuss important issues for people's safety.

I want to thank Chair Schakowsky for her leadership to keep the lines of communication open.

We have talked a lot about the importance of bipartisan work... which is why I was surprised by the majority's actions leading up to this hearing.

It was my understanding that my bill--- to speed up the fast track recall process--- was to be considered as a discussion draft as we continue our negotiations.

However, this week our staff was informed that E&C will not consider staff drafts for legislative hearings.

So, I was bewildered when yesterday the Health Subcommittee did just that with the “No Surprise Act.”

As all Members can appreciate, finding out hours before a deadline that a bill needs to be introduced, does not give us time to incorporate feedback, find bipartisan cosponsors, or do any of the proper work required to introduce a bill.

All that said, I did quickly introduce my bill before today's hearing and I'm committed to finding bipartisan consensus to improve it.

I am glad the majority is including it for consideration today.

A bipartisan approach moving forward not only gives our solutions their best chance to become law, but also gives the public the best chance of seeing results that keep them safe.

The CPSC's mission is to protect people against risks of injuries and deaths associated with consumer products.

While we cannot protect everyone from every harm, it's our job to address substantial hazards without creating too many opportunities for dangerous "work-arounds."

For example, one of the bills today deals with crib bumpers.

It's critical we examine what states have done in this space so we don't create the risk of parents putting blankets or pillows—which pose a suffocating danger-- back in the crib because they can't access **safe** mesh bumpers.

Earlier this Congress, this subcommittee held an oversight hearing with Acting Chair Buerkle, and the four Commissioners of the CPSC.

Chair Buerkle is steadfast in her efforts to advance the safety mission of the agency and I once again urge my Senate colleagues to confirm her.

The CPSC, though small in size, has broad jurisdiction over more than 15,000 products that are used every day in our homes, schools, and businesses.

Recently we've heard concerns with the slow speed of the existing fast track recall program.

In some cases, recalls are taking several months.

In fact, Mr. Samuels highlights examples in his testimony that prove why we should speed things up.

Examples like a 2-week approval process for recall press releases debating the exact phrases of social media posts and requiring toll free numbers, which may have made sense in the 90's when Fast-Track was created—but not anymore.

The Fast Track Recall Program is intended to protect people by encouraging companies to come forward with dangerous products so they can work with the agency.

But like many things in Washington D.C., Fast-Track is now slow because of an outdated bureaucracy.

It's a program from 1995 that isn't functioning today.

As a result, some companies have bypassed it completely, leaving the CPSC out of the process.

So, it's time for an update.

It's important to maintain the connections between the CPSC and good actors in industry especially when it means removing hazardous products from our homes to keep our kids out of harm's way.

That is why I've introduced the "Focusing Attention on Safety Transparency and Effective Recalls" or the FASTER Act, H.R. 3169.

My solution will make Fast-Track work in the 21st century by giving consumers notice more quickly when a company submits a specific recall plan to the CPSC and by learning from the company-initiated recall processes at NHTSA and the FDA.

It allows a business to notify the Commission of a recall and directs the agency to **promptly** issue a notice.

No more press release delays, and no more hang ups over toll free numbers.

For parents who own dangerous baby cribs and rockers for households with appliances that are a fire risk and for our children with toys that are a choking hazard, these bureaucratic delays cannot happen.

The FASTER Act will get these products out of our homes and off the shelves as quickly as possible and it will still give the Commission the flexibility it needs to ensure a company remedy is right and--- if necessary--- initiate its own recall.

It makes sure that when something goes wrong there's a process in place for recalls to happen and for them to happen fast.

I hope we can work in a bipartisan way on this solution that can save lives as well as the many other important issues we will discuss today, such as H.R. 806, the Portable Fuel Container Safety Act.

I thank our witnesses for being here today and look forward to your testimony.